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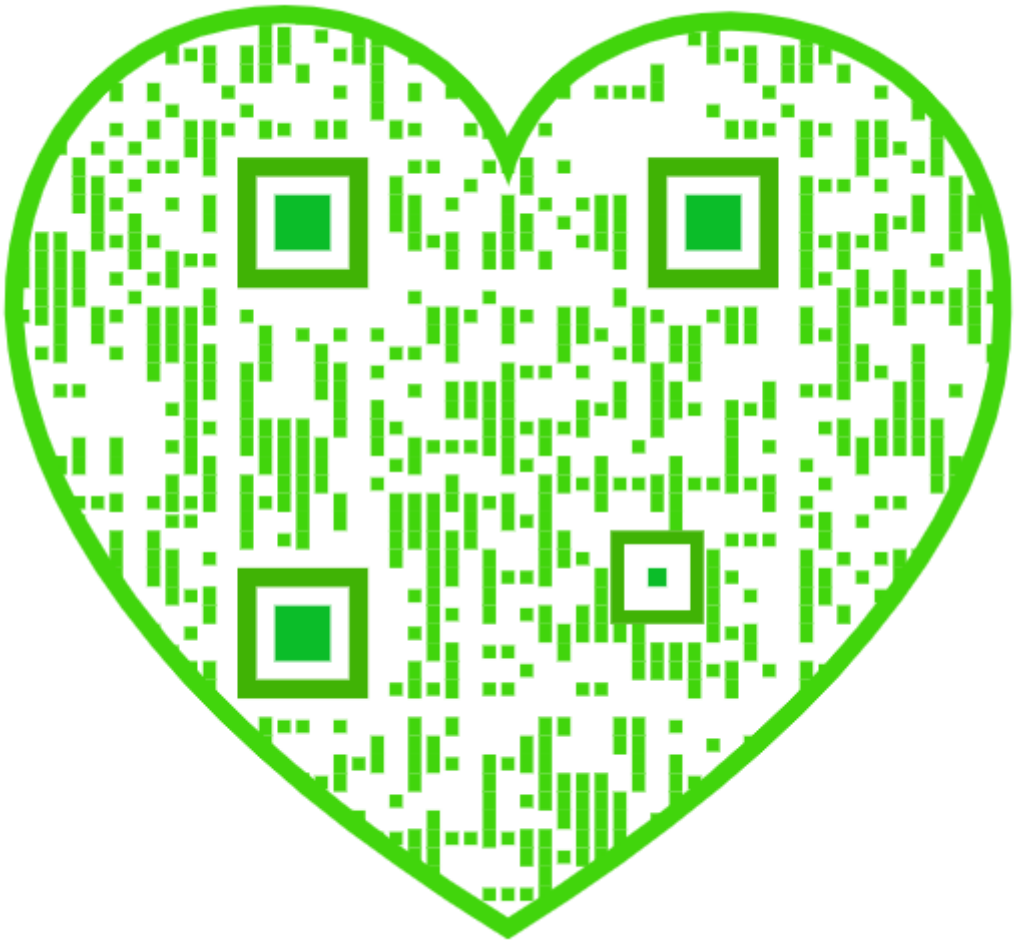

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Architectural Wood Carving

D. H. BIGGS

SAN FRANCISCO
JULY, 1902

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APPRENTICES' WORK

July 1900-1902

WILMERDING SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIAL ARTS

SAN FRANCISCO
JULY, 1902

D. H. BIGGS, INSTRUCTOR

An outfit of wood-carving tools consists of

1 bench.
2 large handscrews.
2 iron clamps.
1 light mallet.
1 heavy mallet.
30 to 60 steel tools, including a number of short bent tools—front bent and back bent.
1 oil stone.
1 oil can.
10 oil slips, which should be sand-papered to fit the tools.
1 leather strap.
1 try square,
1 compass,
1 pair calipers, } These to be used only when the eye cannot be trusted.
1 French file.
1 French rasp.

Get the Addis tools or some other standard make, selecting long, rather than short ones, and adapt their handles in both size and form to the tools.

On a grindstone remove about five-eighths (5/8) of an inch from the back edge of the tools; sharpen them thoroughly with oil stones that have previously been prepared until they have a straight bevel one-eighth (1/8) of an inch long on each side, thus making one bevel on their face and two bevels on their back; strap them and they are ready for use.

It is desirable to stand at work in such a position that one

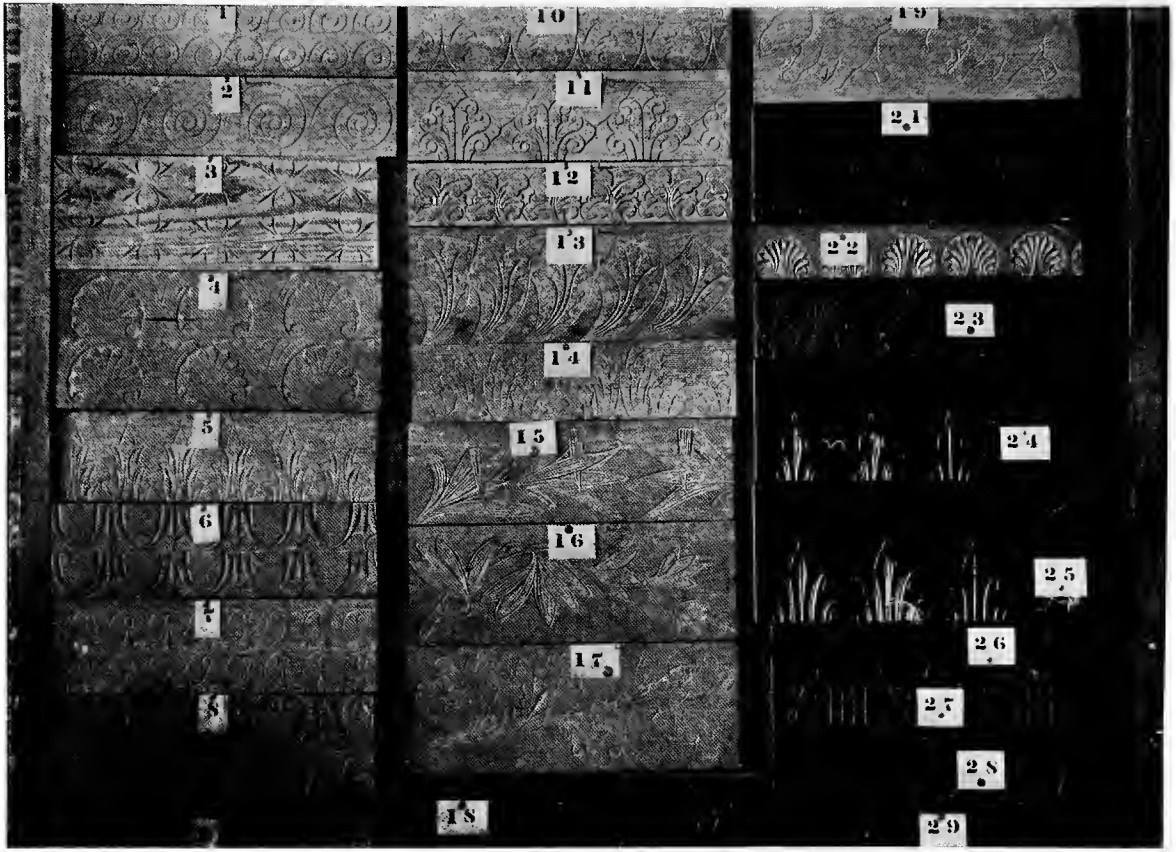
may throw the weight of his body on the tools in forcing them forward in steady, unbroken sweeps, avoiding, as a rule, jerky cutting.

In carving, remove all unnecessary wood before drawing in the correct outline; block out the highest lights first; the second highest next, and so on until the full outline is completed, then finish it; that is, carve it all over so that it will show the character you wish when in its place, no matter how it appears on your work bench. A discreet use of fluters in roughing out work, can save one's time.

Study life and nature. In your reproductions of historic ornament, follow the best obtainable specimens. Cultivate memory work and practice original designing and original executing. Cut lengthwise, crosswise, and otherwise, and let the tool marks show. Educate the left hand as much as the right. Squint at your work occasionally while doing it, and, before you consider it finished, look at it from a distance, and as far as possible look at it as others may see it.

Try to see which way the grain of your woodwork runs and, if it breaks before your cutting, cut more lightly or in some other direction. Hold your head away from your work and grip the tools firmly while doing heavy carving and while making continuous, unbroken sweeps. Tools should be sharp and suited in size and form to the work that is in hand, and made to do all they can do before you put them down. For small work and fine or delicate effects, use hard wood; but use soft, close-grained wood to quickly produce broad effects.

If one expects to earn his living at wood carving he should, in his execution, strive to develop the greatest possible speed and to produce the most artistic effects. With the desire, with the opportunity, and with a little hand training any one can reproduce in scale, any form, line or lines he comprehendingly sees.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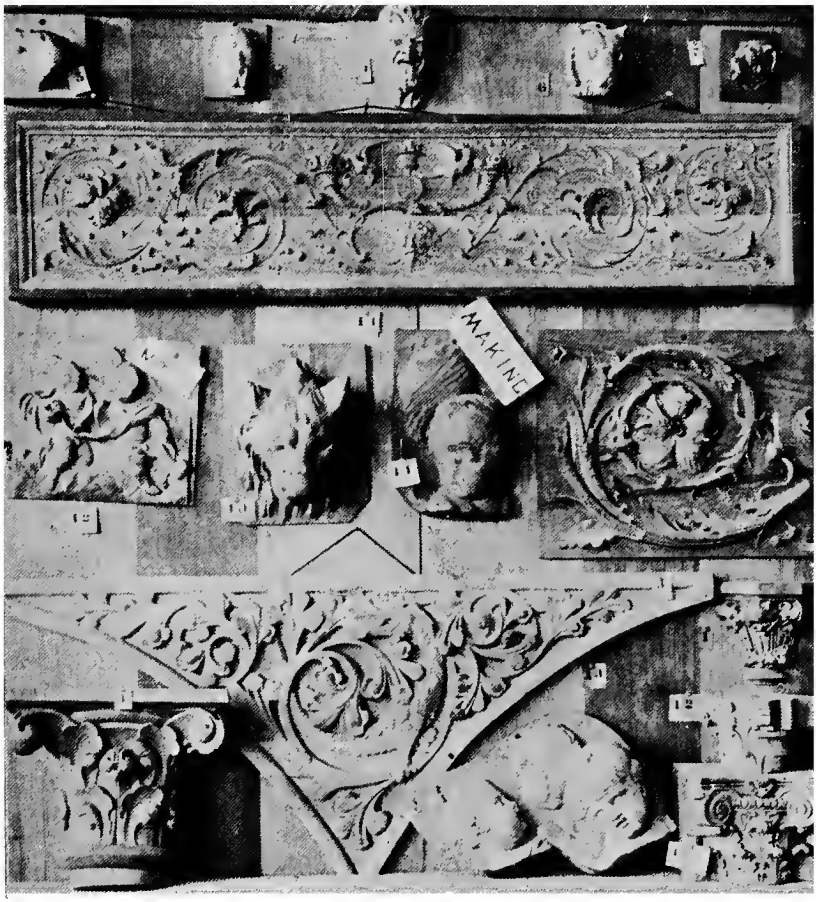
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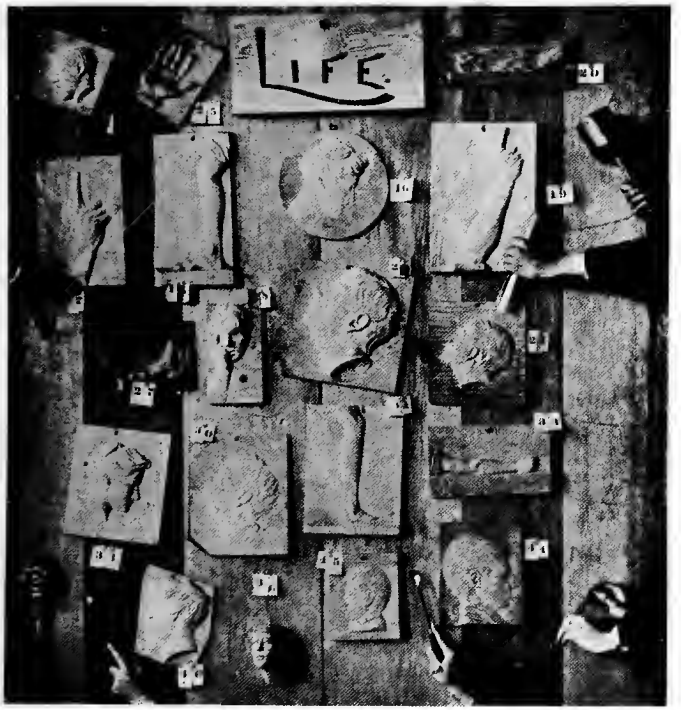
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